



***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
September 9-13, 2013***

Private hospital will provide care to aboriginal people across Canada

[Kelowna Daily Courier](#)

07 September 2013 18:00

Don Plant

Westbank First Nation's new private hospital will not only offer surgeries for pay, but provide health-care to aboriginal people from across Canada, says Chief Robert Louie. The band is 'very strongly' considering construction of the \$120 million medical centre at Highway 97 and Westside Road to begin next month and to finish by early 2016, Louie said. Once it opens, patients from across Canada and beyond would pay out of pocket for most medical services, including organ surgery, joint replacement and cosmetic surgery.



Westbank First Nations plans to build a 100-bed private hospital next to the band's office off Highway 97 at Westside Road.

The band's other objective is to improve the health of aboriginal people. Doctors will have full lab and diagnostic services, Louie said. They'll conduct research into diabetes and heart disease, and treat people long-distance by using closed-circuit TV.

"That's one way of saving huge amounts of money - bringing experts to do that," he said. "We're trying to minimize and save costs and have a better service - that's our goal. We know the health system is full of flaws. Anyone in that medical facility will

tell you that."

The band is joining Ad Vitam Healthcare Ltd., which represents private investors in Canada, to build and operate the facility in a 50-50 partnership.

The first phase would feature 10 operating rooms, high-end food services and full lab and diagnostic services. The band may also buy a private jet to fly patients to destinations like Vancouver.

Research will become a primary focus, Louie said. Scientists at the Mayo Clinic have identified a gene linked to cancer that's unique to North American aboriginal people. "We figure we can work on that gene. Whether it's stem cells or whether we look at further research to separate that gene, we may be able to prevent cancer in aboriginal peoples. That would be a major world breakthrough."

The federal government is responsible for providing health-care to aboriginal people through the Canadian Constitution. The hospital, tentatively called the Lake Okanagan Wellness Clinic, would use public funds to treat them.

The WFN, which has its own governance agreement with Ottawa, intends to dip into the billions of health-care dollars spent by Canadians on medical procedures outside the country. The band says it has its own constitution with Canada and can't be prevented from running a for-profit centre for medical tourists.

So far, Ottawa has not objected to the hospital operating outside Health Canada and its universal medical plan.

Canada, B.C. and the province's aboriginal people have agreed to transfer administrative responsibility for health care to a first-nations health authority and council as of Oct. 1, Louie said.

Hundreds of workers will be hired to build the 200,000-square-foot hospital and 400 full-time equivalents to operate it. The band has "stacks" of resumes and letters from researchers and administrators from high-profile facilities, he said.

"We have interest by nurses, students, and universities that is simply huge. There will not be (a) shortage of staff."

Regina resident brings aboriginal designs to Couture Fashion Week in NYC

[Regina Leader-Post](#)

September 9, 2013 9:47 AM

Kerry Benjoe



National Aboriginal Fashion Week founder Chelsa Reil helped three First Nation designers showcase their work at Couture Fashion Week in New York City. Photograph by: Don Healy, Regina Leader-Post files

It was seven years in the making, but one Regina resident has taken First Nation fashion global.

"It was overwhelming," said Chelsa Reil, co-director of Couture Fashion Week in New York. "I was busting at the seams. I was so happy."

At exactly Friday at 6 p.m., powwow music blared from the speakers and three powwow dancers performed on the catwalk in New York during one of the most prestigious events in the fashion world.

"It went amazing," Reil said Saturday morning from her New York hotel room. "As soon as the dancers came out and some of the models came out, everybody's cameras went up. I was watching from the balcony up top and was taking video."

To be part of the show was a dream come true for the local fashionista.

"The best part of it all was to watch it all come to life," Reil said. "I had tears in my eyes to see the reaction of other people as they watched the show."

Although she is not a fashion designer, she loves fashion and knew there was a niche for First Nations designers.

About seven years ago, Reil began networking with those in the industry and two years ago she launched National Aboriginal Fashion Week in Regina.

Launching her show in Regina was just the beginning. Last year she began looking for other shows to partner with and was both surprised and ecstatic that Andres Aquino, director of Couture Fashion Week was interested in partnering with Reil for a show.

He invited her to New York to help co-direct his show and as part of the partnership she was able to invite three First Nation designers to showcase their work.

Reil said Sho Sho Esquiro, Lynda Kay Peters of Ringing Bell Robes and Linda Lavallee of Cree Nisga'a designs stole the show. "They were swarmed after the show by media, by people in the audience and by the other models," said Reil. "The next show started at 8 p.m. and the designers and models were still on the red carpet doing interviews."

She chose the three designers not only because of their ability to be cutting edge in terms of fashion, but the fact that culture is incorporated in all that they do.

Lavallee wanted to pay tribute to her heritage, which is why the powwow dancers were part of the opening ceremonies for the event.

Prior to the show, the designers prayed and they smudged themselves, which is a traditional First Nations cleansing ceremony.

Then before the models hit the stage, the lead powwow dancer blew an eagle whistle in the four directions as a way to honour First Nations culture, said Reil.

She said it was great to be able to show the world what First Nations people have to offer.

Reil said her work is far from over and is staying in New York this week to help plan another fashion show.

She said next year's Aboriginal Fashion Week in Canada will be even better because of all that she's learned in New York.

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First Nations education advocate donates \$300K to Gull Bay: Margaret Anderson hopes more supporters will come forward to help education, employment program

[CBC News](#)

Sep 9, 2013 1:05 PM ET

A philanthropist born in Thunder Bay is funding a pilot project to help educate and train 15 people in Gull Bay First Nation.

Margaret Anderson does most of her work in health care and has founded a cancer hospice in Oakville, where she now lives.

But Anderson is contributing \$300,000 to a Gull Bay education and employment program because she says more needs to be done for education on First Nations.



Thunder Bay-born Margaret Anderson is giving \$300,000 of her own money to help fund an education and employment program in Gull Bay First Nation in northwestern Ontario. (Supplied)

"With the reserves, they can't keep teachers, they don't get paid enough," she said.

The program focuses on providing adults with Grade 12 credits and life skills, along with employment counselling.

She said she hopes positive results this year will inspire other foundations to help in the future.

"We help people in Third World countries, and we're ignoring our own people," Anderson said. "So I feel very strongly about that, so I'm going to stay with it."

Encouraged 'there's interest'

Project co-ordinator Vernon Ogima said the funding will pay for staff positions, including a teacher and employment counselor.

"We have always had skills training happening in our First Nations," she noted. "[But] a lot of times what happens is the people are being trained before they have the education ... to even apply for jobs."

Anderson said the program will also respect traditional culture.

So far, partners in the program include Anishinabek Employment and Training, YES Employment Services, The Adult Education Centre and Nookiwin Tribal Council.

"I'm encouraged that there's interest," Anderson said. "[Because] I think that's the whole problem with youth ... they've become disillusioned, so many of them, that they don't think there's any point."

Anderson will be in the community on Sept. 16, when the official start of the school year begins.

First Nations media coverage lacking, critics say: First Nations make up 2% of Canada's population and get less than 0.5% media coverage

[CBC News](#)

Sep 6, 2013 3:25 PM ET

A group that is teaching people on northern Ontario reserves how to be journalists says the existing coverage of aboriginal issues is pitiful.

Journalists for Human Rights says it studied print and online media coverage only and said it found that stories on aboriginal issues made up less than half of one per cent of all stories published last year.



Journalists for Human Rights, a Canadian media development organization, conducted a quantitative analysis of media coverage in Ontario of Aboriginal people, culture and issues between June 1, 2010 and May 31, 2013. The study examined the trends, news spikes and tone of media coverage focused on Aboriginal people. (Supplied)

Spokesperson Robin Pierro said that's not enough coverage for a group that makes up two per cent of the

population.

The coverage that did exist was also mostly of crisis situations — such as the housing emergency in Attawapiskat.

Pierro acknowledged news media organizations frequently gravitate toward conflict or negative stories, but said they are missing positive stories in aboriginal communities.

"If you look at news coverage of Toronto, or Sudbury or Timmins there are other community based stories that don't just focus on crisis," she said.

Pierro says ongoing stories like the recent election in Attawapiskat should be covered more widely.

She also pointed out that one of the group's students helped a CBC reporter who covered the election.

"She is working in collaboration with mainstream media and we'd like to see it get to the point where CBC doesn't have to send someone to Attawapiskat because we have someone there with the equipment and the skills to produce those stories."

Coastal First Nations Vow 'Good Fight' to Stop Grizzly Hunt

TheTyee.ca

06 September 2013 13:41

By David P. Ball

First Nations up and down B.C.'s coast have returned fire after the government denied they have the authority to ban grizzly bear trophy hunting on their traditional territories.

Coastal First Nations – a coalition of eight B.C. bands – launched a campaign yesterday with a short video that included a photo of Clayton Stoner, a B.C.-born hockey player with the Minnesota Wild, posing with the severed paws and head of a grizzly. He had a provincial permits to kill the bear, despite local bands declaring a ban on the sport. The bear, nicknamed "Cheeky" by locals, was left to rot in the Kwatna Estuary after its fur was removed.

"It is atrocious to see such waste, and to see such a majestic creature just taken for its fur," Bob Chamberlin, vice president of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, told The Tyee. "Seeing the carcass, and realizing the true face of what happens after the harvesting occurs – the entire carcasses was just rotting in the estuary.

"I thought we as a society were moving past our barbaric ways, and were starting to look at things from an ecosystem approach to everything."

Chamberlain is also Chief Councillor of the Kwicksutaineuk Ah-kwa-mish First Nation (KAFN) — not a member of the Coastal First Nations — and told The Tyee his band is equally opposed to grizzly hunting, thus extending resistance across almost the entire coast.

Province has authority, insists minister

On Wednesday, Coastal First Nations released an opinion poll conducted by McAllister Opinion Research which found that 87 per cent of British Columbians

agree the grizzly hunt "should be banned," including 78 per cent of respondents who "strongly" support such a closure.

The battle over bear conservation turned into a jurisdictional dispute Tuesday after the Minister of Forests and Lands, Steve Thomson, insisted no such ban exists because First Nations do not have jurisdiction.

"(We) asked that the Coastal First Nations respect the province's authority over grizzly bear management," Thomson told The Tyee in an emailed statement. "The grizzly bear harvest is based on the best available science. Within the traditional territories of the Coastal First Nations, approximately 58 per cent is closed to grizzly hunting."

Indigenous leaders immediately rejected Thomson's demand for respect today. "They'll have a good fight!" Heiltsuk nation councillor Jessie Housty told The Tyee. "The bottom line is the government has told us they'd like us to respect their authority on this issue; but we'd like them to respect our authority.

"For us as First Nations on the coast, it's very intuitive that something like trophy hunting -- and the senseless slaughter, for sport, of animals that are a huge part of our culture -- is at odds with the future we're envisioning for our communities and our people."

Coalition exploring legal options

Stoner, who plays defence for the Wild, defended his haul by saying he had won one of this year's 3,786 grizzly hunting tags in a provincial lottery.

The total tags issued to hunters each year has risen by 27 per cent over the last five seasons. The province estimates there are 15,000 of the large omnivores, and depending on success rates, only about 300 grizzlies are actually killed annually. Hunting them costs non-residents \$16,000.

"I grew up hunting and fishing in British Columbia and continue to enjoy spending time with my family outdoors," he stated. "I applied for and received a grizzly bear hunting license through a British Columbia limited entry lottery last winter and shot a grizzly bear with my license while hunting with my father, uncle and a friend in May.

"I love to hunt and fish and will continue to do so with my family and friends in British Columbia."

Housty insisted the purpose is not to vilify individual hunters like Stoner, but to shine a light on the B.C. government's licensing regime, and what natives say is disrespect for their clearly stated wishes.

"I grew up with bears, close to them," Housty said. "They are beautiful, intelligent animals, and they deserve dignity and respect -- not to be gunned down as soon as they emerge into a meadow."

In response, she said that Coastal First Nations are "exploring all (their) options" including possible legal avenues to enforce its disputed grizzly hunting ban.

"One of the things many people underestimate is that First Nations on the coast are sovereign nations," she said. "We are self-governing peoples -- governments that never ceded our territories."

"We have a right ... to manage our territories in a way that we see fit, and that is consistent with our values." [Tyee]

B.C. First Nations group gets \$139,000 in tsunami cleanup cash from Japan

[Vancouver Sun](#)

September 9, 2013



Another small vessel likely from Japan washed up on northern Vancouver Island, as debris from the 2011 deadly Japanese tsunami continues to hit B.C.'s shores. Debris around the newly-discovered vessel included a life jacket and steering wheel assembly, both with Japanese writing. Photograph by: Living Oceans Society, Handout

HAIDA GWAII - First Nations on British Columbia's north coast will share in \$139,000 in funding from the Japanese

government to establish a tsunami debris cleanup program.

The money comes in response to a successful proposal by the Haida Gwaii Tsunami Debris Committee that includes the communities of Queen Charlotte, Skidegate, Old Massett, Masset and Port Clements.

The committee works with various groups including BC Parks, a school district and a regional district.

The B.C. government says that since last year, the committee has taken an active role in dealing with debris arriving on the shores of Haida Gwaii after a massive earthquake and tsunami struck Japan in March 2011.

The debris has been widely dispersed by ocean currents, and little of what was originally estimated to show up in B.C. has actually washed up on shore.

Japan has provided about \$1 million in tsunami cleanup money to Canada, with a federal-provincial group deciding how the cash is dispersed.

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Inuit art exhibit tells timeless tundra tales

[The Guilfordian](#)

September 9, 2013

Brent Eisenbarth, Staff Writer



Photo Credit: Allison DeBusk

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then an art gallery is a storyline.

“Narratives from a Culture in Transition” debuted in the Guilford College Art

Gallery on Sept. 4. This exhibit displays Inuit art from artists in Nunavut, Canada’s largest and northernmost territory.

This display showcases Inuit artwork of various mediums, topics and levels of abstraction. Stonework, whalebone, caribou antlers, watercolors and tapestries are only some of the mediums that make this exhibition exciting. The artwork recalls rich Arctic traditions, reflects on the tundra landscape and peers into Inuit mythology.

Terry Hammond, founding director and curator of the Guilford Art Gallery, began researching this project in 2011. Since then, the exhibition has spawned related classes, work-study projects and awareness to the ongoing battle for First Nations’ rights.

“Part of the mission of the art gallery is to promote diverse cultures and to support the academic endeavors of the college,” Hammond said.

And it seems this exhibit will do just that.

For example, on Sept. 11, Associate Professor and Chair of Religious Studies Eric Mortensen will expound on Sedna, the goddess of the sea from Inuit mythology.

According to the mythology, Sedna's fingers became the sea creatures, the Inuit's staple of life. When the hunt was poor, Inuits would send shamans, the Inuit middlemen between the natural and the spirit world, to appease Sedna. The Inuit believe that Sedna would then provide sea creatures for their livelihood.

On Oct. 24, Mortensen will compare Inuit religion with other shamanistic religions. This event will be held at 7 p.m. in the Art Gallery.

Art is a reflection of humankind's cultural reality. That being said, this comprehensive event would not be complete without speaker Aaju Peter.

Peter certainly isn't your typical mother of five; she is an Inuit activist who performs music, designs modern seal clothing, translates and recently earned a law degree. In 2012, she was named to the Order of Canada for promoting Inuit language and culture.

She has also been advocating that seal skins be sold more widely. Currently, the EU allows seal skins to be used only for cultural purposes, but not commercial purposes.

"It will have a devastating effect; it already has on the hunters," said Peter to This Magazine. "They normally would get \$60 to \$90 for a skin. Now they get about \$5. The cost of living is very high in the Arctic. They won't be able to get enough money to sustain their families."

Peter will speak in the Carnegie Room in Hege Library at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 20.

To offer insights on the works on cloth in the exhibition, Canadian Art Historian Marie Bouchard will present about this unique art form in the Leak Room in Duke Memorial Hall on Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Bouchard has curated exhibitions for Inuit art across Canada, the United States and Japan. She is an independent art curator who has lived in Baker's Lake for 11 years.

"I'm excited to see a new art exhibit from a different cultural perspective I have not seen before," said sophomore Nina Troy.

This event is highly anticipated, and it will work to expand Guilford's horizons, particularly northward towards Canada and the Inuit.

Risk of suicide 40 times higher for Inuit boys

[Canadian Medical Association Journal](#)

September 10, 2013



Anna Joanasie with son Paul, whom she adopted after losing her older son, Jimmy, to suicide in their Iqaluit home when Jimmy was 16 years old. Photo credit: Laura Eggertson

Sixteen-year-old Jimmy Joanasie seemed fine to his mother the day he went into his room and hung himself.

It was Apr. 25, 2006.

Jimmy, a friendly, outgoing athlete who played floor hockey and basketball, and practised Tae Kwon Do, had left an extended family gathering with his mother, Anna Lucy Joanasie, and his sisters just 20 minutes earlier. His youngest sister, then 13, opened his bedroom door in their home in Iqaluit, Nunavut, to find him hanging.

"I have no idea why he hanged himself. Still today I don't know why," says Joanasie, an interpreter and medical transport aide. "He was my best friend, and he was my helper."

Young Inuit men are at the highest risk of suicide of any population group in the world — many of them simply don't survive their teenage years. From 1999 to 2011, Inuit males aged 15–19 killed themselves at a rate of just over 500 per 100 000, according to statistics compiled from coroners' records by Jack Hicks, a researcher and PhD candidate studying Inuit suicide. That's about 40 times greater than the rate for non-Inuit males in the same age group (12.6 per 100 000 for Canadian males aged 15–29 in 2009). Overall, Nunavut Inuit take their lives at a rate nine times the Canadian average.

The family members left behind, like Jimmy's mother, struggle to understand why. They also cope with a stigma attached to their parenting skills, she says.

"Some people point at us...as bad parents. Lots of people say 'That's why you lost your son,'" Joanasie says. "I say, 'I'm a good parent.'"

A follow-back study, or psychological autopsy, released in June into the suicides of 120 Inuit people who took their lives between 2003 and 2006 provides some clues about the risk factors among the Inuit. They include high rates of childhood sexual and physical abuse, depression, and alcohol and marijuana use, according to interviews the researchers conducted with surviving family members and friends. Other Inuit who committed suicide had recently experienced triggering factors such as the breakup of a romantic relationship or were facing court charges.

Some Inuit men who have survived suicidal periods point to family circumstances, including poverty and substance abuse, as critical factors. They also report the prevalence of suicide around them as making it seem almost reasonable.

Junior Kopak was 14 when one of his closest school friends hanged himself in his grandmother's bathroom. Four years later, Kopak's girlfriend hanged herself in her room.

Kopak also considered suicide during his high school years. His parents were unemployed and depended on welfare and the National Child Tax Benefit to feed the family, but his father's drug use often meant that Kopak and his brothers and sisters were hungry.

"We would be eating lunch at home, and when they were finished I would ask them if they were full. If they said 'No,' I would give them my plate, so that they wouldn't

be hungry," Kopak says. "Sometimes I would think killing myself would be easier than living life."

His love for his little sisters kept Kopak from killing himself, he says. He didn't want them to think suicide was an acceptable response to pain.

It might seem unusual to most Canadians that a 21-year-old like Kopak could have experienced the level of trauma he copes with, from the suicides of those close to him and his own difficult childhood. For Nunavummiut, however, it is almost unremarkable, as Nunavut Health Minister Keith Peterson pointed out in a speech earlier this year at a fundraising dinner in Iqaluit for Embrace Life, Nunavut's suicide-prevention organization.

"It is heartbreaking that the issue has become so commonplace in our community that it has almost become normalized," Peterson says. "Anywhere else in Canada it would be a national tragedy."

The prevalence of suicide is the reason Nunavut's Suicide Prevention Strategy Working Group called for Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) to be taught widely to caregivers and community members across the territory — something the Government of Nunavut has promised but is having trouble delivering.

Peterson took the course himself a few years ago, calling it "eye-opening."

"The more we can identify the early warning signs, the more we can intervene and perhaps save a life," he says.

Since 2009, when Nunavut launched "Uqaqatigiiluk!" or "Talk About It!" a specially adapted version of ASIST, more than 600 people across the territory have taken the workshop. Although anecdotes abound, there are no statistics about how many lives caregivers trained in ASIST have already saved. But critical gaps exist in the frequency with which the Government of Nunavut has organized and offered the training, including in school settings.

Meanwhile, parents like Joanasie are left to pick up the pieces of their lives. Recently, she adopted a baby boy, Paul James, to help repair the hole in her heart.

"I'm healing very slowly, because my heart was torn into a thousand pieces when we got the news that [Jimmy] didn't make it," Joanasie says.

Editor's note: This is the fourth of a series on suicide in Nunavut, Canada; the other stories can be read at cmaj.ca. Laura Eggertson received a 2012 Michener–Deacon

Fellowship for Investigative Journalism award, which supported her travel and the research into this series of articles about suicide by Inuit and First Nations youth.

Troubled Métis Nation of Saskatchewan divided

[CBC News](#)

Sep 10, 2013 10:47 AM ET



MNS President, Robert Doucette, addresses accusations against him at the organization's Legislative Assembly meeting in Saskatoon, September 7th, 2013.

There was plenty of controversy at the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan legislative assembly in Saskatoon over the weekend.

Vice President Gerald Morin and his supporters — many of whom are also members of the Provincial Métis Council —served President Robert Doucette with a court injunction, trying to stop the Legislative Assembly meeting from going forward.

There are allegations of misspending, and the group is working with lawyers.

“Mr. Doucette has done a lot of wrong since 2007. Since he took over as president, there has been tremendous problems in terms of executive compensation and travel, there has been double billing,” said Morin.

The injunction seeks the following until trial and final judgment:

- That there be a Provincial Metis Council meeting as soon as practically possible and that the Respondent not attempt to block such a meeting;
- That the Metis Nation Legislative Assembly illegally called by the Respondent for September 7 and 8, 2013, be canceled and void if held;
- That the Metis Nation - Saskatchewan cabinet portfolios as approved by the PMC on October 29 and 30, 2012 in Watrous, Saskatchewan be declared valid and duly formed; and
- That the Respondent provides disclosure to the Applicants on the following issues: I. The unauthorized sale of MN-S assets worth \$1,190,829.00;

President Robert Doucette tells CBC News he has been transparent.

"Auditors, or people that have come in there, there is nothing wrong with these audits," Doucette said.

"There are some financial management issues that have to be dealt with, but overall we are very pleased with how the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan is running."

Doucette maintains a recent audit report has been public since its completion in 2011, and that accusations against him are unfounded.

Catholic board offers aboriginal languages credits

[Brantford Expositor](#)

Monday, September 9, 2013 7:03:32 EDT PM

Michelle Ruby



Local aboriginal youth now will be able to earn high school credits for studies in their own heritage languages.

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board is partnering with Gai hon nya ni (They are learning): Amos Key Jr. E-Learning Institute to offer online courses through the board's Continuing Education Services.

The courses, offered in Mohawk, Cayuga, Ojibwe and Oneida, will begin on Oct. 15 for those aged 15 to 30.

"Languages are who we are as people," said Audra Maloney, executive director at the Amos Key Jr. E-Learning Institute. "It is important for young people to reconnect back to their culture and communities."

Maloney said the local Catholic board is the first to partner with the institute, which promoted the courses to various school boards across the province.

The beginner-level native language courses, which will teach basic conversation, along with traditional prayers and songs, can replace French as a required credit for graduation.

Bill Chopp, superintendent of education for the Catholic board, said a survey determined there was interest among aboriginal students for language courses.

But bringing in a teacher to instruct one course a day would have been difficult, he said.

The Amos Key e-learning format proved to be a good fit. Students will gather in a classroom where they will be equipped with computers and headphones that will link them to instructors teaching their chosen language. An on-site teacher will be in the classroom to oversee the instruction.

Other Amos Key Institute students in various locations across the province will also have access to the computer-based instruction. Teachers, too, will be located across the province.

"The language courses are taught by aboriginal experts who not only provide excellent instruction, but understand the history of the language," said Chopp.

The courses are being funded by the Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board and are free to aboriginal youth between 15 and 30. Others are welcome to participate for a fee.

Maloney said each course will be capped at about 24 students.

"Every year more and more elders are passing away who are fluent speakers," she said. "We need families to be speaking these languages at home, even if it's just a little bit."

The Amos Key Jr. E-Learning Institute, a private school operated by the Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board, is now in its fourth year of operation. Key is the longtime director of the First Nations Languages Program with Woodland Cultural Centre.

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Want to know more?

An information meeting about the aboriginal languages courses will be held at Assumption College on Monday, Sept. 30. The session will detail the courses and the registration process. School board staff and representatives from the E-Learning Institute will be there to answer questions.

Information is also available by contacting Continuing Education Services, St. Mary Catholic Learning Centre, 455 Colborne St., 519-753-0552 or by e-mail at info@bhncdsb.ca (<mailto:info@bhncdsb.ca>).

Mushkeowuk Council launches inquiry into suicide pandemic

[Wawatay News](#)

September 10, 2013

After receiving no government support, the Mushkegowuk First Nations in the James Bay region of Ontario will launch a 'Peoples Inquiry' to address the suicide crisis troubling their communities.

"The suicide pandemic we experienced is like a deadly disease that is so unpredictable, hard to understand, very difficult to cure and definitely has been felt in every home throughout our communities," said Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Stan Louttit.

In a three-year period between 2009 and 2011, Mushkegowuk reported that about 600 youth and other community members experienced suicide ideation and loss of life.

"This suicide pandemic devastated our communities and we need to do more research to find the real root causes of this pandemic and we never want our people to go through such a tragedy again," said Mushkegowuk Council Deputy Grand Chief Leo Friday.

The Mushkegowuk First Nations decided at a Summit in 2010 to develop an inquiry into the causes of the crises and how they can be addressed. After spending several years unsuccessfully applying for federal and provincial government support, the Mushkegowuk chiefs decided to proceed on their own.

The First Nations have raised \$226,000 from their communities and from donations from corporate partners. Although there is a shortfall in the budget of \$46,885 the communities are proceeding.

Four community members have been selected as commissioners for the inquiry, along with a commission coordinator.

The commissioners will hold two sets of hearings in each of the seven member First Nations in Mushkegowuk Council over the coming year. Despite not having all the funding secured, the seriousness and sense of urgency to start the People's Inquiry prompted the Council of Chiefs to begin by hiring a coordinator and four commissioners. The lead commissioner is Mike Metatawabin from Fort Albany First Nation; Elder commissioner Jackie Fletcher from Missanabie Cree First Nation; youth commissioner - Helen Kataquapit from Attawapiskat First Nation and health & social commissioner Dorinda Vincent from Moose Cree First Nation and Nellie Trapper from Moose Cree First Nation.

The public hearings are scheduled to start in Sept. 2013 and to be completed by March 2014.

Inuit laud feds' suicide prevention work, say enormous job lies ahead

[Metro Ottawa](#)

September 11, 2013

Graham Lanktree



Graham

Lanktree/Metro Natasha Allakariallak, 18, and Shauna Seeteenak, 21, perform traditional Inuit throat singing on Parliament Hill Tuesday during World Suicide Prevention Day.

Canadian Inuit applauded federal government efforts to reduce the high rate of suicide in northern communities during World Suicide Prevention Day Tuesday, even as they braced for the “enormous amount of work” that lies ahead.

"I can think of people who I've lost in my life," said Thomas Anguti Johnston, president of the National Inuit Youth Council, at a gathering on Parliament Hill, noting the suicide rate in Inuit communities is 11 times higher than the national average.

"I don't know any native in Canada who can say they have been unaffected by suicide," he added before Terry Audla, president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) – the national Inuit organization – told the crowd 80 per cent of those suicides are among people under 30.

Inuit have gathered on the hill for the past seven years, but said Audla said this year is one to celebrate since the "wheels are turning" after Bill C-300, the Federal Framework for Suicide Prevention, was passed into law December 14, 2012.

"Canada is one of the only countries in the world without a national suicide prevention strategy," he said. The new legislation will see the federal government reaching out to other levels of government and non-profits to begin work on its own framework.

Inuit have begun their own work on a strategy, he said, pointing out that "we need to recognize the uniqueness of our community" and address "a critical lack of infrastructure in Inuit communities" when it comes to the continuum of mental health services.

In 2012 more than 3,500 Canadians died by their own hand, noted Dammy Damstrom-Albach, president of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention which is working with ITK to shape the strategy.

"It's an interplay of biological, psychological, social, spiritual factors often in the context of mental illness – depression, anxiety," she said of the roots of the illness. "Hopelessness is a factor of particular significance when people are suicidal. When people are able to reconnect with hope their will to carry on can build."

However, the work has just begun. "It is going to take an enormous amount of work to make the kind of difference we all want to see," Audla said.

No 'Aboriginal discount' in sex offender's sentencing

[Sun News](#)

7:49 pm, September 11th, 2013

Kevin Martin



Credits: FOTOLIA

CALGARY -- The Aboriginal upbringing of an admitted sex offender was not so tragic as to reduce his sentence, a Calgary judge ruled Wednesday.

Justice Suzanne Bensler said while Patrick Kerry Crowchild suffered verbal abuse at the hands of his alcoholic parents, there was nothing in his upbringing which triggered his crime.

"There is no discount for merely being an Aboriginal," Bensler said, in handing Crowchild a 3 1/2-year sentence for sexual assault causing bodily harm.

"I do not see his Aboriginal heritage as having any relationship to this offence."

Crowchild, 53, pleaded guilty in July to a Sept. 3, 2011, charge in an attack on the Tsuu T'ina First Nation in which a woman was injured.

Defence counsel Telmo Dos Santos had argued Crowchild's tragic past was what led to the alcohol addiction which fuelled his crime.

Dos Santos said Crowchild has no memory of the attack in which he sexually abused his victim after she passed out following a night of drinking booze and hairspray.

The woman had also taken three painkillers supplied by Crowchild after she complained to him of knee pain.

The defence lawyer said there was evidence that Crowchild's dysfunctional upbringing doomed him to the life of alcohol abuse, which led to his criminal behaviour.

He has suggested a three-year prison term, but Bensler agreed with Crown attorney Jim Sawa a lengthier sentence was warranted.

Bensler said Crowchild's jail time will be discounted by the two years and seven days he has spent on remand.

Chamber strengthening Aboriginal-business connection: Workshops planned for the fall

[Calgary Herald](#)

September 12, 2013 7:29 AM

Mario Toneguzzi



*The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is hosting two workshops this fall on the Aboriginal-business connection.
Photograph by: Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald*

CALGARY - The Calgary Chamber of Commerce will be hosting two workshops in its Aboriginal-Business Connection series, which is aimed at helping Alberta's natural resource sector and Aboriginal communities work together.

The initiative brings together Aboriginal and business leaders to build relationships and structure partnerships to further both industry and Aboriginal communities' interests.

The Chamber said Aboriginal-Business Connection Series 2 (ABC2) is the starting point for a report it will be doing: Building and Sustaining Successful Partnerships.

"The Chamber has a long and proud history of working for positive change to strengthen Aboriginal-business connections," said Adam Legge, president and chief executive of the Calgary Chamber.

On Sept. 18 at the Calgary Telus Convention Centre, a workshop will be held on industry collaboration dynamics.

On October 7 at the same place, a workshop will be held on structuring equity partnerships between business and Aboriginal communities.

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Chalk artist to highlight First Nations' plight at Victoria festival

[Times Colonist](#)

12 September 2013 14:48
Adrian Chamberlain

What: Victoria International Chalk Art Festival

Where: Government Street, Centennial Square, The Bay Centre (lower level)

When: Saturday, Sunday

Admission: Free

Being told to tone down the social message of his artwork at the Victoria International Chalk Art Festival didn't exactly thrill Dutch artist Leon Keer.

Nonetheless, the Utrecht-based surrealist believes he'll still be able to create a three-dimensional artwork at the Bay Centre that brings attention to challenges faced by First Nations people in Canada.

Keer, a well-known artist who participates in street-art festivals around the world, has started work on a 20-by-20-foot chalk painting on the floor of the Bay Centre's lower level. When finished, it'll feature a Monopoly board around the rim, with images of trees, mountains and other British Columbia scenery inside. A factory-style smokestack will appear to arise from the centre.

The 40-something artist said he originally submitted sketches for a more politically charged artwork. It was to have had pipelines running through it — a reflection of news reports Keer read about First Nations' opposition to the Northern Gateway oil pipeline in B.C. As well, the artist had envisioned the Monopoly game properties would be named after First Nations bands.

After festival organizers conferred with the Bay Centre's management, Keer was told to make his political message "more subtle."

"I think the sketches were seen by too many people and everybody wanted to have a go at it. And that kills creativity," he said in an interview. Nonetheless, the artist said he believes the juxtaposition of a Monopoly board with First Nations habitat will get his message across.

On Wednesday, festival organizer John Vickers said the festival's decision had since been modified. Keer will now be allowed to name Monopoly game properties after First Nations bands.

The oil pipeline still will not be a part of the painting. However, Vickers said that was a fleeting notion raised and discarded early on.

"The pipeline, that was way back earlier when we were throwing around what was going to be on the drawing," he said. "They're now giving him all the artistic licence he wants."

Keer is one of up to 40 chalk artists expected at the festival, running Saturday and Sunday in downtown Victoria. Other artists include Lori Escalara (California), Jonas Mitchell (Utah), Steve Platt (Washington), Michael Las Casas (Florida), Jeanie Burns (Florida) and Jo Lalonde (Toronto). Victoria chalk artists such as Jamin Zuroski and Ian Morris will also take part.

The festival also coincides with the appearance of renowned pavement artist Kurt Wenner. Wenner, considered a pioneer in the field of three-dimensional street art, will visit Munro's Books from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday for a book-signing.

This year's Victoria International Chalk Art Festival has a First Nations theme. Vickers said artists were given the option of using First Nations imagery, with some B.C. aboriginal artists granting permission for their artworks to be reproduced. As well as artists such as Zuroski, who is of Namgis First Nation descent, there will be performances at Centennial Square by the Iskwew Singers and other aboriginal singers, dancers and drummers.

Vickers expects attendance will top the estimated 15,000 who saw last year's chalk art festival. The festival, in its second year, operates on a \$50,000-plus budget. As well as government funding, it's supported by corporate sponsors, Tourism Victoria and Victoria hotels, which donated 130 free nights to artists.

Government Street will be closed to vehicles from Fort Street to Yates Street to allow pedestrians unencumbered access to chalk artists working along the block.

In the event of rain, Vickers said the festival is — or will be — literally covered. He has obtained a roll of plastic measuring 20 by 200 feet to cover artworks from showers.

"You roll it down the whole street like a carpet," he said. "It's for protecting drywall or something."

Keer, meanwhile, said he looks forward to chatting with the public while he creates.

"I like the social aspect. Otherwise, you're sitting alone in your studio making art and you don't get any comments."

Reconciliation Week to launch with All Nations Canoe Gathering

[Vancouver Observer](#)

September 11, 2013

Reconciliation Canada, Canada's first-ever [Reconciliation Week](#) (September 16-22) will begin with the **All Nations Canoe Gathering** in False Creek on Tuesday, September 17, a news release received by the Vancouver Observer said today.

The week culminates with the [Walk for Reconciliation](#) on September 22, according to the press release.

Speakers will include **Chief Dr. Robert Joseph**, Ambassador, Reconciliation Canada, **Justice Murray Sinclair**, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the **Honourable John Rustad**, BC Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.

The All Nations Canoe Gathering recognizes and honors the cultural and spiritual aspects of the dugout canoes and the healing they bring to the people. First Nations will paddle cedar dugout canoes into False Creek from **Vanier Park to Science World**, where they will be welcomed to Coast Salish lands in a traditional ceremony by local First Nations Chiefs of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Indian residential school survivors have been invited to partake in the canoes to enjoy the recognition and honor this traditional ceremony entails. This unique cultural event is free to the public. People of all nations and cultures will also participate by paddling Dragon boats, kayaks and canoes (pre-registration is required).

When: Tuesday, September 17, 2013, 9 am – 12:30 pm

- Canoes leave Vanier Park around 9 am
- Photo opportunity and speeches around 10:05 am at Science World

Where: False Creek (Vanier Park to Science World)

Map: <http://reconciliationcanada.ca/events/all-nations-canoe-gathering/>

The event is part of a week of reconciliation activities in Vancouver taking place in conjunction with the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's \(TRC\) National Gathering Event](#) in Vancouver.

Founded in 2012, Reconciliation Canada is building new relationships between Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians, relationships built on a foundation of openness, dignity, understanding and hope. Reconciliation Canada is engaging people from every part of Canadian society in an open and honest conversation about our diverse histories and experiences in order to build resilient, sustainable communities.

Matawa First Nations chiefs drop Ring of Fire legal challenge: Most Matawa communities hope negotiations assisted by Bob Rae will also address their concerns about environmental assessment

[CBC News](#)

Sep 11, 2013 3:44 PM ET



The Matawa Chiefs Council has announced it will stop a legal challenge to the federal environmental assessment of the Cliffs chromite project in the Ring of Fire. Pictured here in a file photo are, from left to right, Chief Johnny Yellowhead-Nibinamik First Nation, Chief Harry Papah-Eabametoong First Nation, Chief Cornelius Wabasse, Webequie First Nation, The Honorable Bob Rae, Chief Allan Towegishig-Long Lake #58, Chief Sonny Gagnon-Aroland First Nation, Chief Celia Echum-Ginoogaming First Nation, Chief Roger Wesley-Constance Lake First Nation, and Chief Peter Moonias-Neskantaga First Nation. (Supplied)



The Matawa First Nations chiefs have withdrawn a legal challenge to the federal environmental assessment of the Cliffs chromite project in the Ring of Fire.

The case was set to be heard by Federal Court later this month.

In a news release Wednesday, the Matawa Tribal Council said that when it started the court case in late 2011, there was no negotiation table, and it was pushed into a corner.

"There's a forum for discussions with Ontario now and it's going to look at the environmental assessment question, as well as other issues," Aroland Chief Sonny Gagnon said.

Talks with Ontario began recently with Bob Rae representing the First Nations, and Frank Iacobucci negotiating for the government.

Matawa said it expects that mining companies and the federal government will also be involved.

Matawa's announcement came one day after a declaration by Marten Falls First Nation, also a member of the tribal council, that it had withdrawn from the court challenge.

Judicial review not worth the expense

Chief Eli Moonias said his community no longer believes the judicial review is worth the money. Moonias said Marten Falls will now be working directly with Cliffs to develop its own community-based environmental assessment model.

Webequie First Nation withdrew from the court action last year.

"We're focussing on negotiations, but let me be clear, this doesn't mean everything's fine," said, Chief Elizabeth Atlookan of Matawa's Eabametoong First Nation. "The negotiating process is starting, not ending."

Gagnon added that the communities are not happy with the current environmental assessment process, but now have a way to change it through negotiations. He added that a court-ordered solution "is never going to be as good as our own solution."

Cliffs Natural Resources issued its own statement Wednesday, welcoming the prospect of developing "a collaborative working relationship" with Marten Falls.

"We're determined to be a good partner, and will continue to work with First Nations who may be impacted by the project, to understand their concerns and priorities," senior vice-president Bill Boor said.